

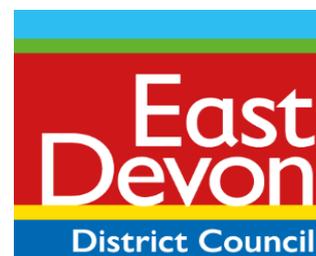
Agenda for Council

Wednesday, 25th February, 2026, 6.00 pm

To: All elected Members of the Council; Honorary Aldermen

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

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This meeting is being recorded for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the [East Devon District Council YouTube channel](#)

Dear Sir/Madam

Meeting of the Council of the District of East Devon on Wednesday, 25th February, 2026 at 6.00 pm

You are called upon to attend the above meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton. It is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered at the meeting and resolution or resolutions passed as the Council considers expedient.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'T. Hendren'.

Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive

1 **Apologies**

2 **Declarations of interest**

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 26)

4 Public speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Announcements from the Chair and Leader

7 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way, but if confidential minutes from Cabinet and/or the Council's Committees are being discussed, Officers may recommend consideration in the private part of the meeting.

8 To answer questions asked by Members of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rules No. 9.2 and 9.5 (Pages 27 - 33)

9 Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees and questions on those reports (Pages 34 - 137)

10 Recommendation from Audit & Governance Committee - Final Auditors Annual Report (VFM) 2024/2025 (Pages 138 - 180)

11 Recommendation from Cabinet - Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/2027 (incorporating Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) 2026/2027 (Pages 181 - 235)

12 Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax Resolution 2026/2027 (Pages 236 - 245)

13 Recommendation from Cabinet - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/2027 (Pages 246 - 368)

14 Motion on Notice: Recognising and Protecting the Rights of Rivers in East Devon (Pages 369 - 372)

Motion 1: Recognising and Protecting the Rights of Rivers in East Devon

Proposed by: Cllr Paula Fernley

Seconded by: Cllr Jess Bailey

Supported by: Councillors Paul Arnott, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Geoff Jung, Steve Hunt, Marianne Rixson, Sarah Jackson, Paul Hayward, Alasdair Bruce, Joe Whibley, Tim Dumper, Ian Barlow, Olly Davey, Anne Hall, Fabian King, Duncan Mackinder, Steve Hunt, Richard Jefferies and Bethany Collins

This Council notes that:

East Devon is home to a network of rivers and streams — including the Axe, Coly, Otter, Sid, Exe, Clyst, Lym and their tributaries, which are central to the district's ecology, landscape character, cultural heritage and community wellbeing. These waterways support wildlife, livelihoods, recreation, food production and the local economy.

Across East Devon and nationally, rivers are under increasing pressure from sewage pollution, agricultural runoff, over-abstraction, habitat loss and climate change. These pressures threaten biodiversity, public health, climate resilience and the long-term sustainability of our river catchments.

This Council believes that:

To safeguard these natural assets for current and future generations, East Devon District Council should demonstrate leadership by recognising the intrinsic value, ecological importance of rivers and they have rights, drawing inspiration from the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers, including:

- the right to flow naturally and seasonally;
- the right to perform essential ecological functions;
- the right to be free from pollution;
- the right to be sustained by, and sustain, healthy freshwater sources;
- the right to support native biodiversity and ecological integrity; and
- the right to recovery and regeneration from environmental harm.

Council therefore resolves to:

- 1. Acknowledge the intrinsic ecological value of all rivers and streams within the jurisdiction of East Devon District Council**, and that they have rights, including the Axe, Coly, Otter, Sid, Exe, Clyst, Lym and their tributaries.
- 2. Affirm the Council's commitment, through its planning and policy functions**, to giving due weight to river protection, flood prevention, sustainable drainage (SuDS), nutrient neutrality, biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure, including through the emerging Local Plan and development management processes.
- 3. Note that river protection and restoration principles** have been embedded within the emerging Local Plan as far as current legislation allows, and that these considerations will continue to inform relevant planning decisions.
- 4. Continue to work in partnership** with relevant national and regional bodies, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, DEFRA, Ofwat and South West Water, to formally communicate concerns about river health and to encourage stronger protections, effective enforcement and catchment-based approaches. As well as asking our MPs to put pressure on Government.
- 5. Recognise the value of citizen science and community-led river monitoring initiatives**, and commit to signposting communities to appropriate regulatory bodies and partners where concerns about river quality arise.
- 6. Encourage collaboration with community groups, NGO's, catchment partnerships and other stakeholders**, where this aligns with existing Council priorities and resources, to share information, promote good

15 Budget Setting & Capital Allocations Panel - Nomination of councillor

To seek the nomination of a councillor to serve on the Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel.

16 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 - Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider passing a resolution having been duly proposed and seconded under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason: Para 3 Schedule 12A Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person

17 Recommendation from Cabinet - Bridge and Structure Inspections 2025
(Pages 373 - 379)

18 Recommendation from Cabinet Exmouth Town Hall (Pages 380 - 395)

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the democratic services team know you plan to film or record so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.

If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Chair has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Speaking will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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